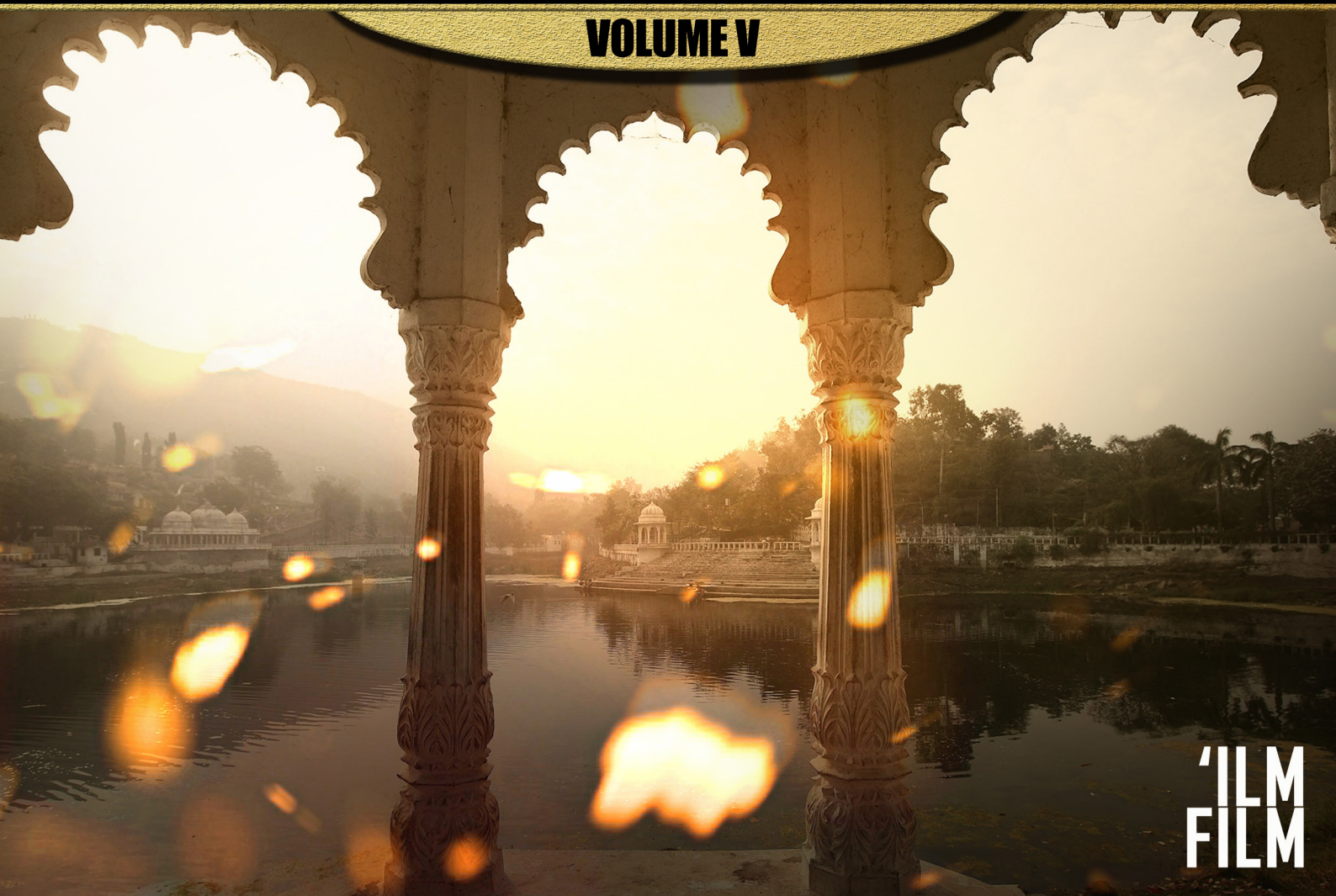


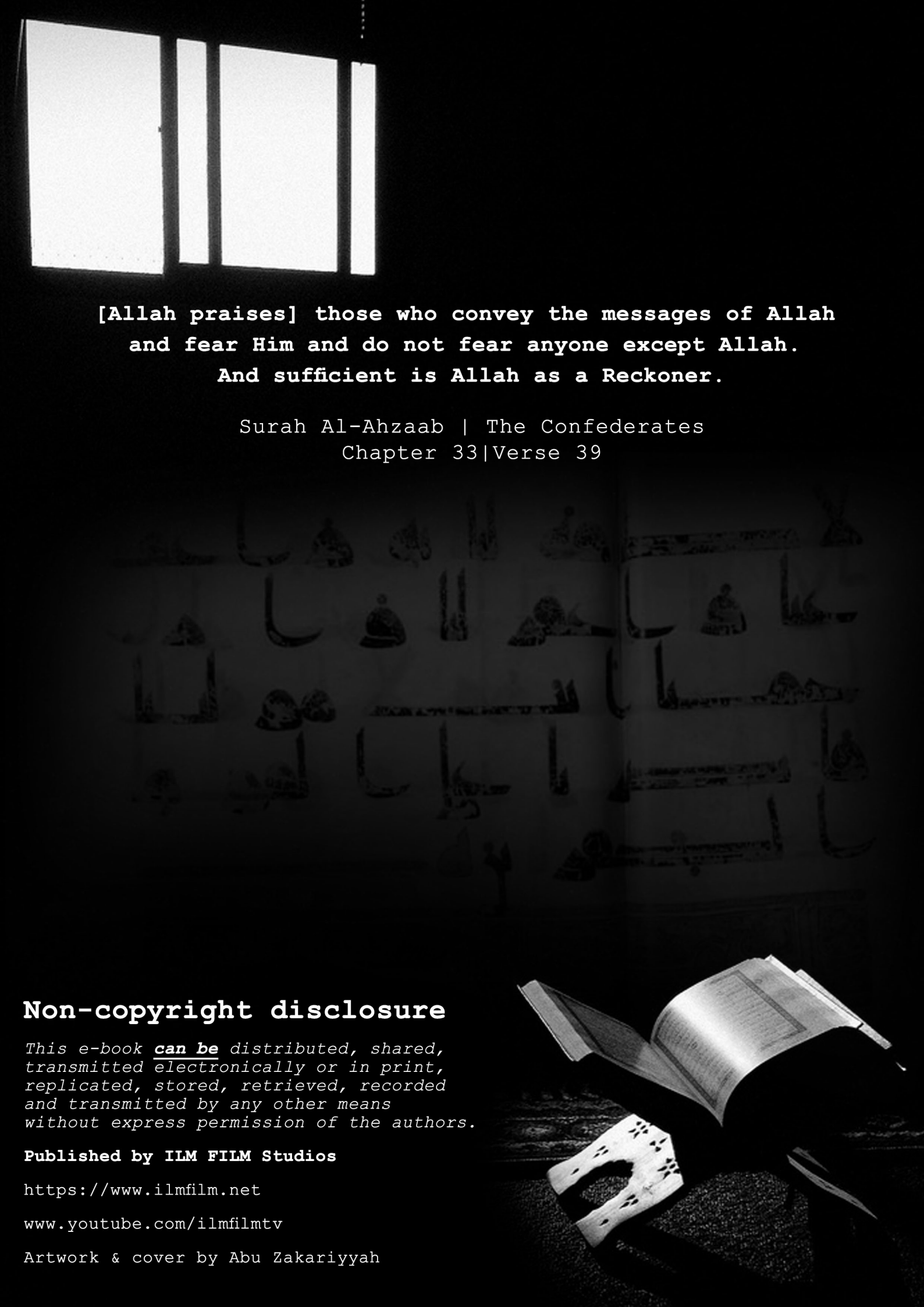


GREAT MUSLIM LIVES

VOLUME V



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[Allah praises] those who convey the messages of Allah
and fear Him and do not fear anyone except Allah.
And sufficient is Allah as a Reckoner.

Surah Al-Ahzaab | The Confederates
Chapter 33 | Verse 39

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Published by ILM FILM Studios

<https://www.ilmfilm.net>

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Artwork & cover by Abu Zakariyyah

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Foreword

May the Peace and Salutations of Allah be upon our beloved Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم)
The Trustworthy, The Final Prophet and Messenger of Allah.

“Until the lion learns to speak, the tales of the hunter will be told”

They remind us of our defeat, our degradation and our deviation from the pathways of progress, piety and prosperity. In such times it may be difficult to draw inspiration and find courage in our identity as contemporary Muslims, however history reminds us that Islam has always been strengthened and supported by men and women of integrity, virtue and of exemplary accomplishments.

It is with a heart full of optimism, hope and love for Al-Islaam that we present to the reader a rich catalogue of contemporary biographies, each one recounting the life and legacy of a great Muslim personality.

Collectively, all of our subjects have demonstrated outstanding will and determination to cherish and champion the legacy and beauty of Al-Islaam in its purest form.

MARYAM JAMEELAH (1934 - 2012)

MUSLIM BY CHOICE

THE AMERICAN DREAM

Margret Marcus, a third generation German-American was born in 1934 into a middle class family that resided in New York. She was of Jewish heritage but family came to America seeking sanctuary and relief from the religious persecution and oppression taking place in Germany.

Not unlike many Americans of her day, Margret enjoyed a modern and uninhibited childhood – especially one wherein her parents although Jewish by ancestry – had all but abandoned the faith in favor of more liberal interpretations of the faith. Eventually they would join a Unitarian Church and abandon their Jewish religion.

During her early years, Margret enjoyed the company of both her parents and her sister, growing up in the quaint county village of Larchmont where the scene was characterized by an affluent parade of Tudor homes buried in the heartland of a dreamy suburbia.

Together with her sister, they were the product of the American dream - living in a beautiful home with freshly cut grass crowned by a white picket fence. Her parents were well educated and the family even owned their own small business. Peggy, as she was lovingly referred to by those near and dear to her – was somewhat different from other children and her reclusive and timid nature often singled her out from her peers.

A PECULIAR ADOLESCENCE

While the blossoming flower of youth was often consumed by the obsessive desire to be a part of all things hip and trendy, from rock and roll superstars to high school discos and Saturday night dates at the movies – to the contrary, for the adolescent Margaret, teenage curiosity and fervour was somewhat too eccentric. While her peers were obsessing over American icons such as Frank Sinatra, she was busy memorizing the lyrics and collecting the albums of Egyptian recording artists such as Umm Kulthum.

In fact her admiration for all things Oriental was apparent long before she had even reached puberty, for at the tender age of ten years old she admired images and photographs of Arabs in the *National Geographic* magazine which she gained access to at the school library.

Her childhood dream was to one day travel to the Middle East and settle in Palestine or Egypt while pursuing a career in art and creativity.

Her frustration and discontent with the evident and virulent bias perpetuated in the books and articles that were widely available in the libraries of America became clear and apparent in her early essays. Only twelve years of age, Margret expressed her concern over the fact that most of the books on Islam were at the time being authored by open Zionists and Missionaries whose interests and motivations were somewhat questionable to say the very least.

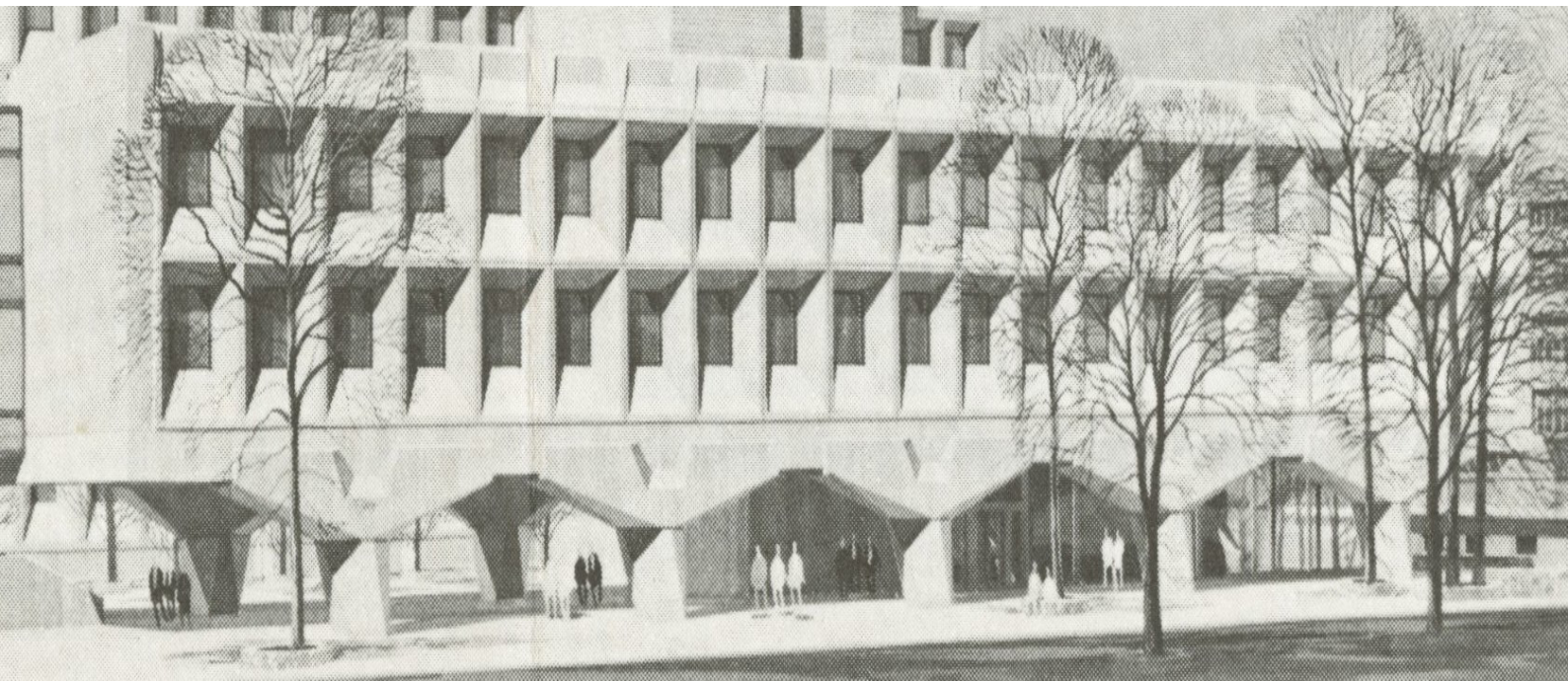


CAMPUS DAYS

Barely in her late teens, Margret was enlisted for a degree at the University of Rochester, however due to severe depression and the nervous breakdown that ensued, she was obliged to cut her studies short in the interest of her health and wellbeing.

Following her eventual recovery, Margret enrolled into the New York University in the spring of 1953. While her classmates were exploring relationships and experimenting with various forms of recreational pastimes, Margret began to delve into her heart and mind in a quest to find her spiritual identity.

For a brief period she attempted to re-connect with her Jewish roots by exploring Orthodox followed by reformed Judaism before moving on to study the principles of the Bahá'í faith, however on both occasions she failed to find a genuine spiritual connection and eventually decided to renounce Judaism and the Bahá'í faith when their support for Zionism became clear and irreconcilable with her inner most sentiments.



FINALLY MUSLIM

This episode continued until she eventually resigned her seat at the New York University.

Now with less distractions and more time at her disposal, Margret began to frequent the public library's Oriental Division, where she would read and study the Noble Quran extensively.

Her reading of Muhammad Asad's *The Road to Mecca* struck a deep chord within her, the author, a former Austrian Jew - had written of his spiritual journey out of Judaism and into Islam, this literary exposition ignited much interest in Margret and she took to the subject anew.

While at the New York University she had also attended a series of lectures by Rabbi Abraham Katsch in what was an attempt to outline Judaism's influence and superiority over Islam and though she herself a Jew, had been attentive to the ideas and claims of the

Rabbi – she discovered that the more information she had been exposed to the more she drew closer to Islam.

This spiritual endeavor culminated in her eventual conversion to Islam on May the 24th in the year 1961. The twenty seven years old convert to Islam soon changed her name to Maryam Jameelah and with the help of an Imam somewhere in Brooklyn, she took her first steps towards a lifelong journey of peace, faith and conviction.

Margret, formerly an American by birth was now a Muslim by choice. She expressed the fact that her conversion was not a rejection of her heritage or history, rather it was a re-affirmation of the principles that all Abrahamic religions represented at the core level, she chose the name Maryam – which was of Jewish origin and venerated both by Christians and Muslims.

NEW HORIZONS

Soon after her embrace of Islam, Maryam Jameelah began to feel a deep sense of attachment to all things Muslim and Islamic, she found herself longing to live in a traditionally Muslim country and thus the plan to make Hijrah began to occupy her heart's desire.

It was with a pleasant surprise that she earned the support and encouragement of her friends and family as her intentions to embark on the journey abroad became more and more tangible.

The day of departure finally arrived in the year 1962 when upon receiving a generous invitation from Sayyid Abul-'alaa Maududi to travel and live in Pakistan, Maryam Jameelah finally started her journey. Upon arriving at her destination she spent some time with the household of Abul-'alaa Maududi before receiving and accepting a marriage proposal by Muhammad Yusuf Khan – a student of Maududi. She accepted the proposal and married Muhammad Yusuf Khan, settling down with him and giving birth to five children.

Though the sacrifice was tremendous and the decision somewhat momentous, Maryam Jameelah remembers her early years in Pakistan as being the formative period during which she grew to become mature, established and more confident in her identity.

INTELLECTUAL THOUGHTS AND WORK

Yet if her conversion story had left many of her new brethren in faith in utter amazement and admiration for her sacrifice and sincerity of heart – it was of equal amazement that she too observed and marveled at the rapid westernization and disintegration of traditional Islamic identity and values within the Muslim lands.

It would seem that while she traversed continents, abandoning America for a more Islamic environment, the people she now lived amongst were just as eager to traverse continents in search of what she so willingly left behind in the West.

Her initial assessment of the deep sense of inferiority apparent in the thinking and mannerism of Muslims in the East - became the subject of many articles and books in which she cites an example wherein she had not been able to find a single toy that was not fashioned after the blue eyed blond haired European standards of beauty, leaving her quest to find a Pakistani looking doll, near impossible.

Although a sharp critic of the moral laxity and permissive airs of the Occidental world, she also reserved a fair share of criticism for those pseudo-intellectual and self-proclaimed modernized Muslims who openly shunned traditional Islamic norms in favor of western trends, which for the most part was nothing more than blind imitation and loyal subservience to Western bias and opinion.

In her final conclusion, Maryam Jameelah strikes a very pertinent and cogent argument in that what is often referred to as cultural slavery, is in fact far more pervasive and deeply rooted within the heart of a conquered people than any form of political or financial domination.

American by birth, Jewish by heritage and Muslim by choice. Maryam Jameelah spent several years writing and publishing literature in defense and praise of Islam, her unique perspective as a western born woman who chose to live by the laws of Islam not only disrupted the popular stereotypical argument that women were forced to comply with the faith but she in fact turned the tables and began to question the principle thoughts and ideas that were for so long overlooked in western society and its subjugation of the sacred feminine.

Her critical assessment of the sexual exploitation and objectification of women in America and Europe helped frame a new sort of intellectual and cultural perspective among many thinkers and protagonists on both sides of the argument.



A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Maryam Jameelah was the archetypical western revert to Islam, full of enthusiasm for her faith and unwavering in her convictions.

She became one of the few women to openly and purposefully discuss the rights and responsibilities of women in Islam from an unapologetic standpoint. For at a time when many women were being stirred up with the notion of western feminism, she remained firmly grounded in her conviction that Islam offered a greater and more noble form of liberation in contrast to the so called emancipation of women promoted elsewhere, whereas in fact this was nothing less than a thinly veiled plot to promote the sexual promiscuity of women in an attempt to subvert and undermine the firm foundations of marriage, family and ultimately - society.

It may also be noted that during her most active years, Maryam Jameelah was a lone voice in and amongst a raging ocean of male voices who had long imposed their feelings and opinions on Muslim women without recourse to what Muslim women really felt about their rights, identity and opinions in general. Her pen was as sharp as it was eloquent in the cause and defense of Islam and it's women.

Imran ibn Hussain reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Surely Allah loves his servant, believing, poor, abstaining from begging and father of a big family.

—(Ibn Majah)

Abu Omamah reported from the Prophet who said: Envious is the lot of that Muslim who is with least incumbrance, whose main fortune is *Salat*, who remains content with humble provision throughout his life, who worships his Lord in a dutiful manner, who lives a nameless life and who dies an early death with very little to bequeath and very few to mourn him.

—(Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah)

Ghazzali reported that the Holy Prophet said: Allah will say on the Resurrection Day: where are the chosen ones of My creation? The angles will enquire: O our Lord! Who are they? He will say: The poor Muslims.

—(Abu Mansur Dailami)

Haresah ibn Wahab reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Shall I not inform you about the kings of the inmates of Paradise? Yes, said they, O Messenger of Allah. He said: Every weak and poor man laden with dust and dishevelled in hair.

—(Agreed)

Ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Verily, there is a key for everything and the key of Paradise is love for the poor.

—(Darqutni)

MISHKAT UL MASABIH



Zionism is allied with all the other forces of contemporary atheism working day and night to exterminate us religiously, culturally, politically and physically. May this story, began during my childhood, help arouse the Muslims of the Arab world and adjacent lands to unite in *Jihad* against our common foe and stem the calamity that is engulfing us before it is too late!

LEGACY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Maryam Jameelah was a prolific author and an unwavering champion of traditional Islamic values, principles and culture. Her many books and articles continue to offer a great wealth of knowledge and information for audiences both in the West and in the East with several translations now available in Urdu, Persian, Turkish, Bengali, Bahasa Indonesian and in many European languages.

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PAL

IMAM WARITH DEEN MUHAMMAD (1933 - 2008)

THE INHERITOR

BENEATH THE SHADOW

Wallace Delaney Muhammad was the son of one of Black America's most controversial leaders during the latter part of the twentieth century. Born in the year 1933 somewhere in Michigan, Elijah and Clara Poole's seventh son brought so much joy to the family that in a gesture of filial loyalty, the new-born was named in honour of the late Wallace Fard Muhammad, the illusive character who is often credited with the initiation of the pseudo religious cult often referred to as *the Nation of Islam* (NOI).

Wallace Muhammad grew up under the shade of his father, the undisputed leader of the NOI cult - for a period of forty years. Wallace was distinguished from his many siblings, drawing him closer to his father and placing him in the very likely role of future leader within the NOI.



TWO DIFFERENT PATHS

Wallace was a soft spoken and somewhat reserved adolescent who grew up during tumultuous times characterized by an oppressive and racially charged climate of hate and discrimination directed towards all members of the African American community.

Wallace Muhammad, like many of his contemporaries living under the subjugation and oppression of the America's racially segregated system - refused to participate in any military activities by objecting to be drafted into the United States army. His bold and principled decision to reject enlistment into the army resulted in a plea bargain which he also turned down in accordance to his father's council. Eventually, in an uncompromising decision to remain a conscientious objectivist - the young man accepted to serve a fourteen month jail sentence at the federal prison in Minnesota.

Though his early struggles and sacrifices for the Afro-American cause have gone widely unnoticed, it may be true that Wallace Muhammad's calm and audacious dissent paved the way for the likes of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr and Muhammad Ali's open denunciations and refusal to join the United States Army even if it resulted in imprisonment.

A DAY IN PRISON A LIFETIME OF FREEDOM

Although he was no stranger to libraries and classrooms during his formative years, it was in the secluded holding cells and concrete quarters of a prison house that Wallace Muhammad found the seeds of true knowledge. His solitary confinement afforded him much time to contemplate and re-assess the teachings of the NOI and much of his father's erroneous and pseudo-theological doctrines.

Like Malcolm X's life changing epiphany in jail, it was during his own imprisonment that Wallace Delaney Muhammad – the son of Elijah Poole, would experience a religious re-awakening that took him out of the narrow and eccentric periphery of the Nation of Islam and towards the vast and luminous fold of orthodox Islam.

His study of the Noble Quran resulted in a reformed perspective that put him in direct conflict with many of his father's core teachings.

Eventually Wallace Muhammad grew in conviction that not only were the beliefs and tenets of the NOI divergent from normative Islam, but moreover – many of the tenets being taught by his own father were in fact corrupt and blasphemous.



THE SEPARATION

Following Wallace's release from prison and his apparent change in perspectives, the relationship between father and son grew colder and the gap widened between the two resulting in several orders to expel Wallace from the NOI.

This period in his life was perhaps the most painful and difficult time for Wallace Muhammad, he suffered much adversity and was even disowned by his family because of his objection to the deviant beliefs and practices of the NOI.

When his father's financial support and assistance was discontinued, Wallace Mohammed sustained a living for himself by seeking employment in various trades – from carpet-cleaning to working in a bakery just to make ends meet.

TEACHING MALCOLM X

While much of Wallace Muhammad's struggles and achievements have been dismissed and denigrated by some critics by the mere fact that he was the son of Elijah Muhammad, this is in fact unjust and factually inaccurate, for in this case the son did not walk in the father's footsteps, instead he parted ways from the deviations of the former and traced his tracks back onto the main path and proceeded to direct others towards the same path in spite of the severe reprisals and risks he exposed himself to.

This culminated in the momentous breakthrough in which Malcolm X's unwavering faith in Elijah Muhammad came crashing down to pieces when the reality of what was happening within the NOI was finally exposed by none other than Elijah Muhammad's own son and most likely inheritor – Wallace Muhammad. Had it been that this shattering disclosure came from any other than Wallace Muhammad himself, Malcolm would have found it impossible to believe the allegations and would most likely have remained in the NOI.

However, it was the honest, courageous and unwavering rectitude of Imam Wallace Muhammad that opened Malcolm's eyes to the reality and subsequently set him free from the NOI, resulting not only in his conversion to Sunni Islam but also prompting him to embark on his famous Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca only a few months before his assassination. In fact, Malcolm's decision to travel towards the holy land came from the direct advice and encouragement of Wallace Muhammad.

LET MY PEOPLE KNOW

In 1975, Elijah Poole - the supreme leader of the Afro-American pseudo religious and racial cult known as the NOI - died, leaving his son Wallace Muhammad as the next in line to inherit the leadership of the group, becoming Supreme Minister by acclamation.

Now at the helm of his late father's empire, Wallace initiated a series of transformative measures by which he intended to help the community gradually transition out of the NOI and into Sunni Islam.

At the head of this strategy was the open declaration that racial supremacy was not in accordance with the true teachings of Islam. Wallace Muhammad publicly denounced his father's teachings in no uncertain terms, admitting that he was neither God nor a prophet of God. The movement was also to be renamed from the *Nation of Islam* to the *American Society of Muslims*.

TOWARDS A GREATER COMMUNITY

Imam Warith Deen Muhammad was a man of broad vision and unwavering courage, his endeavors to reform and integrate the African American Muslim community from the fringes of society and into the mainstream is vastly under-appreciated and often ignored altogether.

In his pursuit of the objective, the Imam became heavily involved in the affairs of the American Muslims with the primary motive of securing the means by which his people could not only survive in America but thrive as a distinctly Sunni Muslim community both at home and abroad. His profile in the Muslim world also began to grow and by May 1979, he became the only American invited to attend the 10th Annual Islamic Conference of Ministers hosted in Fes, Morocco - and on December 23rd in the year 1989 he spoke at the Annual Conference of the Islamic Committee for Palestine.

INCREMENTAL CHANGES

The changes were gradual but progressive as Imam Wallace began to move his community towards a more mainstream understanding and practice of Islam, this he achieved by exemplary leadership, he demonstrated the change in himself before demanding it from his congregation and just as he had changed the name of the movement, he too changed his name from Wallace Delaney Muhammad to Warith Deen Mohammed in the year 1980.

Though the transitional period was rough and unpredictable – Imam Warith Deen Muhammad persevered with patience and dedication as he proceeded to replace the misguided teachings of his father for traditional and mainstream Sunni rituals and beliefs resulting in the introduction of Arabic classes, the establishment of the five daily prayers, the observation of fasting during the month of Ramadan and the once in a lifetime Hajj pilgrimage.

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Among the many international speaking tours and engagements that the Imam participated in - were several respected forums wherein he openly expressed his opposition to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and to South Africa's apartheid regime. Back home in America, Imam Warith Deen Muhammad became an elected member of the Islamic Society of North America's *Shurah consultative board of Imams and community leaders* in the year 1990.

In 1993, Imam Warith Deen became the very first Muslim to give an invocation in the U.S. Senate where he also offered prayers during the first *Inaugural Interfaith Prayer Service* during the presidency of Bill Clinton.

Elsewhere, his inter-faith work resulted in several meetings with Pope John Paul II as well as dialogues with high ranking ministers from the Catholic and Jewish communities. Along with this noble effort, a great many of the NOI left the old teachings and followed Imam Warith Deen into Sunni Islam. Estimates of up to two million conversions have been cited in various publications since written.



A LIFETIME LEGACY BEYOND THE GRAVE

After a lifetime of struggle and dedication to championing the truth, the ministry and work of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad – considered by many to have been Black America's first and most remarkable Muslim Imam and community leader, came to an end in early September 2008.

His death has been attributed to a probable heart attack. However what remains of Imam Warith Deen Mohammed's outstanding legacy is that by the will of God, he orchestrated and cultivated the single largest mass succession of conversion to Islam that the Western world has witnessed in the twentieth century, bringing millions of African Americans back into the fold of Islam as a direct result of his teachings and visionary efforts.



GREAT MUSLIM LIVES



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QARI MUSTAFA ISMAIL (1905 - 1978)

UNsung MELODIES

BIRTH AND FAMILY

The birth of Mustafa Ismail in the year 1905 marked the beginning of what was to become a legendary era of outstanding Quran reciters from within Egypt.

Al-Shaykh Al-Qari Mustafa Mursi Muhammad Ismail was born near Tanta, in a small village bordering the outskirts of Cairo but he would grow up to be known as “*Malik ul-Qurra*” the king of reciters.

Raised by his grandfather, the young prodigy was committed to learning and rehearsing the luminous verses of the Glorious Quran from a very early age.

Not long thereafter he was enlisted to join the school of Sheikh Abdel Rahman Abul-Einein, where he completed his memorization of the Holy Scripture by the tender age of ten years old.

THE SON RISE

Though still very young in age and capable of learning so much more in the art and discipline of recitation, Mustafa Ismail was already drawing unsolicited attention to himself by virtue of his beautiful voice and his precise recitation of the Noble Quran.

He became a small-time celebrity among the local population and soon pursued further studies in Tajweed and Tilaawat under the guidance and instruction of Sheikh Idriss Fakher.

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

As the young talent grew in experience and refined his skill even further under the expert tutelage of senior Quran scholars in the locality, he was soon able to pursue further studies at the Azhari institute of Tanta, during which time he would have been barely fifteen years of age.

While at the institution he studied Tafsir (exegesis), various modes of recitation and Islamic jurisprudence.

Although his original plan was to graduate from the institute in Tanta and enroll for further education at the famous university of Al-Azhar in Cairo, his plans were disrupted when a scholar from Al-Azhar university happened to hear the young man's recitation at a local Masjid one day and encouraged him to redirect his efforts more towards the pursuit of Quran rehearsal, a tradition that had been deeply entrenched into the Egyptian society and could for the gifted and trained reciter become a full time career and profession.



KING FAROUK AND HIGH SOCIETY

By the 1930s when Sheikh Mustafa Ismail was in his twenties, he received an invitation to recite at a gathering in Cairo, his performance garnered much interest in his style and melody resulting in further solicitations.

As his reputation grew in and around the highly influential circles of Egypt he soon became a well-known and respected figure nationally.

On the occasion of a celebration in Cairo, the national radio station was due to broadcast thirty minutes of Quran rehearsal by one of its senior and most admired Quran reciters, Sheikh Abdul Fattah Al-Shashey. However as fate would have it, the sheikh was suffering from a minor ailment and could therefore not recite, but with the limited time available and with tensions mounting high, the decision was made to contact Sheikh Mustafa Ismail instead – this however proved to be a little challenging for the sheikh as he had been accustomed to reciting for several hours in one sitting yet the radio program was scheduled for just half an hour.

He was now faced with the un-foreseen challenge of delivering his best rehearsal and performance in a fraction of the time that he would normally be granted, however he rose to the challenge and went on the air.

Sheikh Mustafa Ismail was reciting live on air when King Farouk of Egypt happened to be listening to the radio. His ears were very attentive to the sublime melodies leaking out from the radio as the rehearsal captivated him and won him over.

He subsequently invited the young Quran reciter, Mustafa Ismail, to recite the Quran from the royal palace every Ramadan, instantly turning the young Qari into the official Quran reciter of Egypt by virtue of the King's very own endorsement and patronage.

This golden opportunity opened many doors for him into the world of radio broadcasting, a rare and relatively novel medium that some of the earlier Quran reciters were often times suspicious of or reluctant to participate in, however with the patronage and approval of King Farouk, the young talent had all the incentive and encouragement necessary to achieve unprecedented accomplishments.

RECITAL STYLE AND TRADEMARK

Sheikh Mustafa Ismail's life marked an iconic convergence of the old and the new tradition in Quran recitation.

He had studied and admired the earlier Egyptian masters such as Shaikh Muhammad Rifaat and Sheikh Abdul-Fattah Al-Shashey while simultaneously inspiring and clearing the path for the likes of Qari Abdul-Basit Abdul-Samad, who had admired Sheikh Mustafa Ismail from early childhood.

Sheikh Mustafa was a respected and established personality within the circles of Quran reciters and among the general Muslim populations – yet he was different from many of his contemporaries and the latter generations of reciters because unlike many of them, he did not study music as part of his training and while many reciters were used to releasing recorded rehearsals of the entire Noble Quran, both in the normative '*Murratal*' mode and in the more evocative '*Mujawwad*' style, to the contrary - Qari Mustafa Ismail had far fewer studio recordings and what remains of his archives were often recorded from live performances. Surviving recordings are very rare and seldom found outside Egypt.

His outstanding ability to convey meaning and evoke a multitude of emotions through the medium of his well-trained voice and perfect articulation of each letter and word often dazzled and amazed even the most experienced composers and singers of his day. The famous Arab musician Abdel-Wahab expressed his admiration and astonishment with the recitation of Sheikh Mustafa Ismail.

According to a number of senior Quran scholars and connoisseurs in Egypt, what was almost miraculous about the style of sheikh Mustafa Ismail and his mode of rehearsal was that the sheikh demonstrated a flawless ability to switch between Maqamaat and to surprise the listeners with the most unexpected twists in tone and melody while seemingly exerting little effort as he seamlessly transitioned between one verse to the other.

It has been said that few reciters have been able to contribute anything new or remarkable to the noble discipline after the late sheikh, in fact it is true that in many well known cases – a good enough imitation of his style is the closest accomplishment many can hope to achieve in this field.

PRESIDENTIAL RECOGNITION AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVELS

As his career progressed so too did his influence and his connection with the ruling classes. In fact it was president Gamal Abdul-Nassir who had awarded Sheikh Mustafa Ismail with a medal of distinction in addition to appointing him as one of his official Quran reciter.

During his life the Sheikh travelled extensively throughout the Arab and Muslim world. One of his most memorable journeys abroad was to Turkey where he was scheduled to visit Istanbul, Ankara and a number of other cities in the year 1969. He was deeply moved by the respect and love that the Turkish population had for the Quran and while he spent the entire month of Ramadan touring and visiting various historic mosques and sights, the President of Turkey extended a generous invite to host the Sheikh at the Royal Palace during which he was presented with a beautiful copy of the Quran inscribed and adorned with real gold.

This official appointment and patronage continued beyond the presidential reign of Gamal Abdul-Nassir right through to President Anwar Sadat's term in office. As a matter of fact, Qari Mustafa Ismail even accompanied President Anwar Sadat on his historical and somewhat controversial state visit to Jerusalem in 1977, as part of the Camp David peace treaty. As much as this resolution drew criticism and blame towards the president and everyone involved in the trip, Sheikh Mustafa Ismail was pleased to have been able to visit Masjid Al-Aqsa from where his recitation of the Glorious Quran was broadcast on television for the entire Muslim world to enjoy.



LEGACY AND DEATH

Al Shaikh Al Qari Mustafa Mursi Muhammad Ismail is celebrated as one of the most gifted and exceptional Quran reciters in recent times. His style and melody has inspired at least two generations of aspiring and established Quran reciters including none other than the great Qari Abdul-Basit Abdul-Samad.

At the time of his death in 1978, Shaikh Mustafa Ismail was one of the official reciters at the Al-Azhar masjid in Egypt.

MARMADUKE PICKTHALL (1875 - 1936)

FOUND IN TRANSLATION

LINEAGE AND BACKGROUND

A man of many talents and one of profound intellect – he embodied the essence of nobility in 19th century England. The son of an Anglican parson serving a small community in Suffolk. Marmaduke was born in London, the year was 1875.

The Pickthalls were of noble ancestry. His father, Charles – traced his lineage back to Sir Roger de Poictu, a knight who had served in the army of William the Conqueror. While his mother - Mary, was the daughter of Admiral Donat Henchy O'Brien who by a twist of fate was recognized as a hero during the war against Napoleon in which his grandfather also rose to fame as master of Victory at Trafalgar.

CHILDHOOD YEARS

At the tender age of five years old Marmaduke became an orphan following the death of his father. Before this unexpected turn of events, the family had lived in Suffolk and enjoyed the rural delights of village life, however when his father passed away the family was obliged to relocate and live in London permanently.

He was soon enrolled to study at Harrow boys' school where he became friends with an aspiring student named Winston Churchill. Following his stay in Harrow, Marmaduke spent time learning several languages, a vocation for which he was endowed with exceptional gifts. During his time in Wales and Ireland he learned Welsh and Gaelic. Before his eighteenth birthday he had sailed off to Port Said with the hope of learning the Arabic language in the hope of landing a job at the consulate office in Palestine.

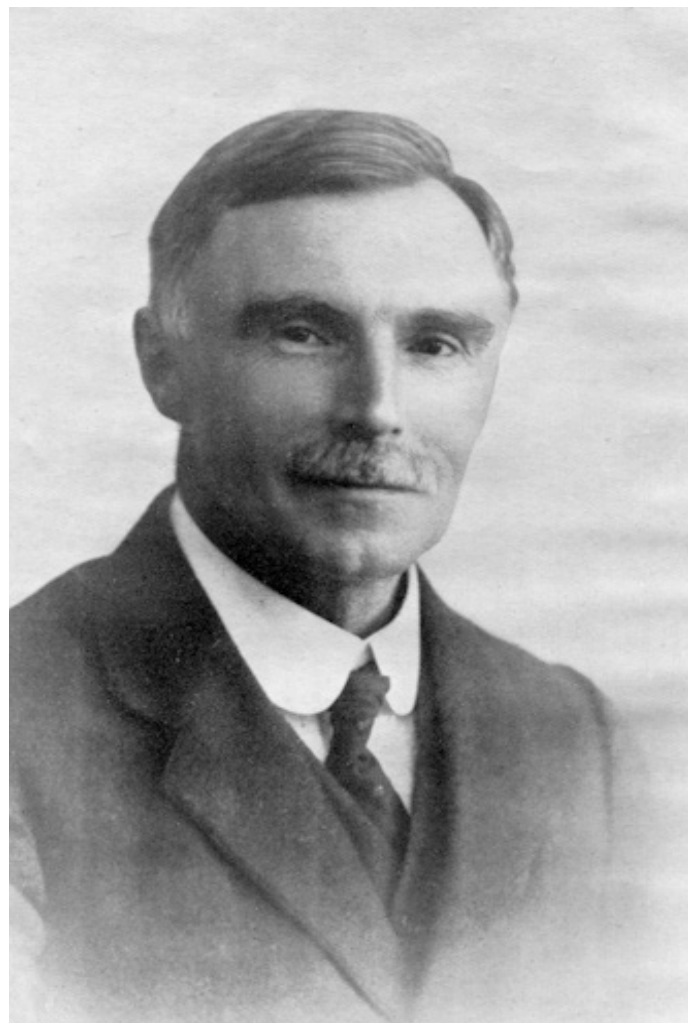
THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

As a young man Marmaduke Pickthall had travelled to the Muslim world and had experienced the way Muslims lived their lives in the most traditional of ways.

His eventual conversion to the faith was the culmination of several encounters and experiences, not least of all were his travels to Jerusalem and then to Damascus which enabled him to spend considerable amounts of time studying the intricacies of the Arabic language subsequently tracing his way back to the luminous and eloquent verses of the Glorious Quran.

It is a fact that Marmaduke Pickthall had desired to adopt the faith much earlier in his life when he was just nineteen years old however his decision was delayed by the advice of a sheikh in Damascus who told him to seek the council of his mother before embracing Islam.

His conversion came twenty years later. Marmaduke Pickthall finally proclaimed his faith in Islam following a lecture in 1917 which he had delivered in Notting Hill before a ready audience at the *Muslim Literary Society*.



THE JOURNEY TOWARDS INDIA

By the year 1920 Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall travelled to India on the invite of some Indian activists who were supporters of the Ottoman Caliphate. He travelled in the company of his wife with the promise of an editorial post at the Indian publication *the Bombay Chronicle*. When he first arrived at their offices the workers were on strike, however within just six months Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall had managed to help them double their subscription base.

He was a supporter of the Khilafat movement as were many prominent Indians, in fact even Mahatma Gandhi - with whom Pickthall developed a close friendship - was encouraging the Indian Muslims to support the Khilafat movement in Turkey, though both men had rejected calls for the use of violent means.

Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall spent the next fifteen years of his life in India where he cemented himself as an impassioned and outspoken supporter of the Muslim people, he became fluent in Urdu and had even voiced concern alongside several Indian scholars against the call for a partition from India – which was popularized by the *Muslim League* under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall was of the conviction that the Muslims of India were in a better position to convert the Hindus if they remained a part of the Indian constitution rather than secluding themselves as a separate state.

Following his tenure at the *Bombay Chronicle*, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall under the patronage of the Nizam of Hyderabad, who was at the time considered the richest man alive – subsequently launched the journal *Islamic Culture*, which he edited for ten years and which continues to be published in the city as one of the Muslim world's leading academic journals

In 1935 Pickthall left Hyderabad. His school was flourishing, he handed over *Islamic Culture* to the new editor, another convert by the name of Muhammad Asad. Upon his eventual return home back to England, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall established a new society for Islamic work, where he continued to write articles and deliver his lectures.



TRANSLATION OF THE NOBLE QURAN

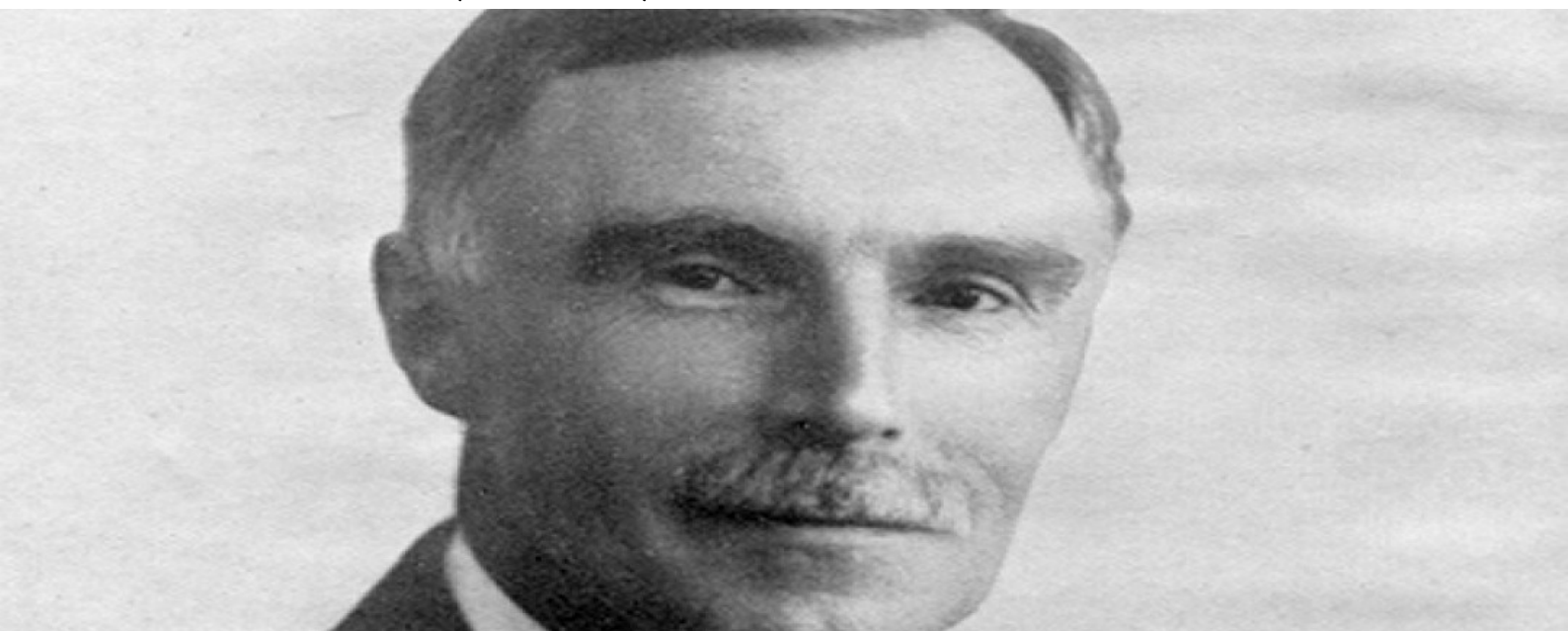
While in India Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall had the distinct opportunity of working for the Nizam of Hyderabad and he was also a visitor at the prestigious Islamic university of Al-Azhar in Cairo, Egypt.

During his many journeys abroad as he documented his findings and observations, what impressed him most about the people of these lands was their relaxed attitude towards worldly possessions and their calm acceptance of the realities of death, which were in sharp contrast to the more materialistic western impulses he was accustomed to back in Britain - where he had also been very active within the Muslim community, delivering Friday sermons in Woking and spending a year running the *Islamic Information Bureau* in Palace Street, London - which issued a weekly paper funded by Indian Muslims loyal to the Ottoman Caliphate, the paper was called, *The Muslim Outlook*.

His famous translation of *the Meaning of the Glorious Quran* was completed while he was in India, the initial manuscriptss were verified and authorized by qualified scholars at the *Islamic University of Al-Azhar* in Cairo, Egypt.

HIS PERSONAL CHARACTER

Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall was noted for being very generous and considerate to others. Towards the latter part of his career as a writer and a scholar in Oriental studies, he was much demanded as a speaker and stood in line to earn a small fortune from speaking engagements in London, however he shun the opportunity of making money and gaining fame and popularity among the British aristocracy in favor of being the head-teacher of a Muslim boys' school in Hyderabad.



DEATH AND LEGACY

Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall died in Cornwall in May 1936, he was 61 years of age. Following his death his body was laid to rest in Surrey, where he shares a cemetery with another well-known translator of the Noble Quran, Abdullah Yusuf Ali. After his death, his widow discovered some of his notes and study material as she cleared his work-desk one final time. There, buried among the notes and books he had been studying the night prior to his death - she discovered his final written message, a direct quote from the Glorious Quran, conveying the following meaning;

'Whosoever surrenders his purpose to Allah, while doing good, his reward is with his Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve.'
Surah Baqarah (2:112)

MUHAMMAD ASAD (1900 - 1992)

ADVENTURES OF LIGHT

A BEAUTIFUL SUMMER

It all began so ordinarily.

Born in the heat of an auspicious summer, Leopold Weiss whose date of birth was July the 2nd 1900 was born into a priestly family, a direct descendent of a long line of rabbinical patriarchs and thinkers. The young soul would develop and unveil himself to the unsuspecting world for the better part of the twentieth-century becoming a leading thinker, theologian, linguist, translator, social critic, reformist, diplomat, political scientist, and an outstanding human being.



YOUTH AND EARLY YEARS

Leo was the son of a Jewish barrister, the first in a long line of Rabbis to break away from the synagogue and initiate himself into the world of legal professionals – nevertheless, the ambitious lawyer ensured that his son would receive thorough instructions and a solid education in the Jewish tradition, enough to qualify him into the family's long established rabbinical tradition.

By the tender age of thirteen years old, the young man was fluent in Hebrew, Aramaic, German and Polish – but as he grew in years, so too did his curiosity and desire to know more. Thereafter he acquired knowledge and understanding of further languages and by the time he had reached his twenties – Leo knew English, French, Persian and Arabic, adding more to his already remarkable repertoire of languages.

THE YOUNG ROMANTIC

Genius is restless and more often than not - it is tied up in the perpetual pursuit of newer and more exciting experiences, for the ordinary conditions that make it easy for ordinary folk to live ordinary lives is much too unbearable for an expanding mind and an insatiable heart seeking to acquire all the wisdom of ancient mountains and eager to preserve the glowing embers of the majestic sun.

Leo's time came earlier than most, and by the tender age of fourteen, he had escaped family and friends seeking heroism and adventure on the battlefield. The unlikely recruit had succeeded in joining the Austro-Hungarian army by the use of false registration details, however he was unable to realize his objective when soon after having joined the army, his father tracked him down with the help of the police who subsequently returned him back to his home in Vienna.

A few years later, the young romantic pursued an academic course in the history of art and philosophy at the University of Vienna, thereafter he travelled to Prague and then to Berlin where he frequented the inner circles of high minded intellectuals and leading thinkers.

During these formative years, Leopold was somewhat of a thrill seeking bohemian who relished the moment and explored several pathways to pleasure – yet beneath the delicate arrangement of thoughts and eloquent conversations lay an even more profound and meaningful urge that remained restless, deep within his soul.



THE NEW DISCOVERY

At last, the wandering dreamer within him was soon to be unleashed onto the world when Leopold received a direct invitation to travel to Jerusalem, the offer was extended to him by his prominent uncle Dorian who was a leading student of Sigmund Freud and later became an authoritative psychiatrist.

In the year 1922 Leopold Weiss departed from his beloved country - Austria, in search of discovery and adventure, he travelled through the exotic terrains of Africa and across the enchanting plains of Asia – yet his mission was not without purpose or intent for he had been sent on the assignment as a special correspondent on behalf of several reputable media outlets and publishers back home Continental in Europe.

These investigative assignments consumed many years from his life, having ventured to the extremities of the Eastern regions of Asia right across to the Western strands of the Maghreb and Transjordan, where he encountered several Emirs and notables.

Between his extended travels to the Muslim world and his intermittent sojourns in Europe, the young traveller saw little of his family. In fact, the last time he was in the presence of his parents in Vienna was in the year 1924. Sadly, this was to be the final rendezvous between himself and his beloved parents who had fallen victim to the horrors of Nazi concentration camps during the rise of Jewish persecution. News of his parent's suffering and inevitable deaths only reached Leopold during the latter part of the 1930s.

BECOMING MUSLIM

Ironically, it was during his time with Arabs in the Middle East that he came closest to discovering the answers to his yet insatiable thirst for truth and meaning, he recounts having been deeply moved by the simple yet profound effect of faith, spirituality and serenity that infused the ordinary lives of so many Muslim men, women and children he had daily encountered.

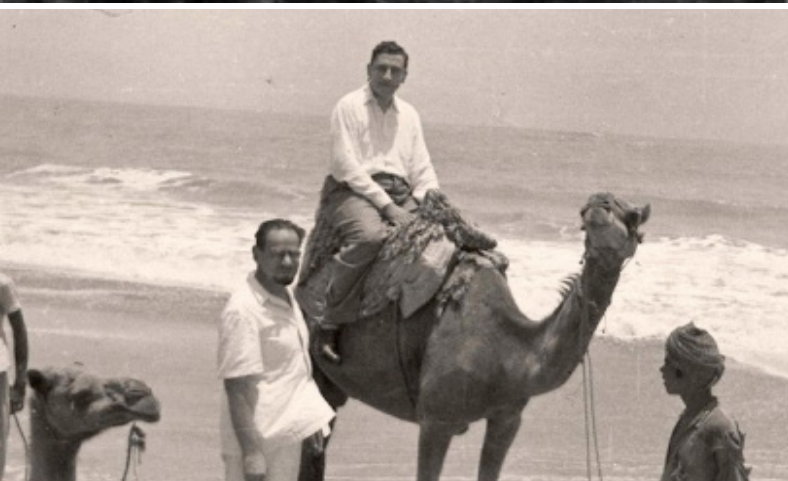
At length, his admiration and respect for Islam drove him to advocacy and open support for the religion, though he had yet to become an initiate of the religion he now talked so highly of. However the decisive moment arose in the autumn of 1925 while he was in the mountainous regions of Afghanistan when a young provincial Governor addressed him with the following words:

“You are a Muslim, you just don’t know it”

These simple words struck a chord deep inside his heart and rendered him utterly mute and in want of a response, however the matter was to be finally decided. Upon his brief return to Europe in 1927, he resolved to stop deliberating about the matter and finally embraced Islam.

In April 1927, Leopold Weiss entered Germany’s first Mosque – in Berlin Wilmersdorf, he emerged a new man and had adopted the name Muhammad Asad, by which he would grace the covers and pages of several books, articles and studies in the years to come. Asad was the name he chose as it was a direct Arabic translation of his birth name, Leo.

Now a Muslim, Muhammad Asad immersed himself entirely in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom, his journey took him to the heartlands of Arabia and beyond the ordinary tracks of most western travellers in the Orient. His profound love and appreciation of the written word resulted in a five year residential course in the enlightened city of Al-Madinah for the most part, but he also took residence with local Arab sheikhs and had participated in the study of several sacred sciences.



FRIENDS AND CONTEMPORARIES

In the year 1927, Muhammad Asad performed the Hajj pilgrimage and later took up residence in the newly found kingdom of Saudi Arabia where he attained the pleasure and confidence of King 'Abdul 'Aziz Ibn Saud, the two became friends after their initial meeting and would be in each other's company on a daily basis, though Asad did not always agree with the king's policies and opinions.

From there, Muhammad Asad continued on his journey and travelled to British India where he encountered the remarkable poet-philosopher and thinker, Sir Muhammad Iqbal- who is hailed by some as the spiritual father and prime architect behind the creation of Pakistan. The two men found great company in one another and soon Muhammad Iqbal reasoned with Muhammad Asad, persuading the latter to stay in India rather than continue with his extended journey to Turkestan, China and Indonesia.

Thus the trajectory of history was set in motion and on the momentous historical occasion in August 14th 1947, Muhammad Asad became a Pakistani citizen and a leading member of the bureaucratic and diplomatic establishment. He subsequently took up the Directorship for *the Department of Islamic Reconstruction* and also rose to the high office of Deputy Secretary in the Middle Eastern Division of the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan. During the 1950s Muhammad Asad also served officially as Pakistan's Envoy to the United Nations.

Here was the living example of a man who sat among scholars in the city of Al-Madinah but also lived in desert tents and rode camels and horses as he actively participated in the liberation struggle against the oppressive fascist forces in Libya, fighting courageously alongside Sidi Muhammad – the man destined to become the future King of Libya.

TRANSLATING THE QURAN

In 1952 Muhammad Asad left the Orient and went to America via Paris following a course of travel that had lasted a quarter of a century. Much to the curiosity and intrigue of European society, the Arabized Jewish convert to Islam elicited much excitement and interest among friends and acquaintances.

Perhaps this growing desire to share his experiences and faith with a Western audience formed an integral part of what drove him to the passionate pursuit of his ambitious task of translating the meaning of the Quran into the English language, to which he gave the title *The Message of the Quran*, this monumental work was published in the year 1980.

Much of the translation work and writing was done at the Villa Assadiyyah, near Tangiers, where the author resided for nineteen years of his life, also writing works on Sahih Al-Bukhari and several other treaties.



THOUGHTS AND ACTIVISM

Towards the latter part of his life, Muhammad Asad grew somewhat discontent and disappointed with the general direction of the Muslim world, his concern was heightened by the intellectual insularity prevalent in many Islamic nations as well as the growing intolerance of certain extremists from within the various opposing schools of thoughts.

Nonetheless, Muhammad Asad remained a steadfast and passionate advocate for Islam, citing the brilliance and profound teachings of Islam in several books and essays on the subject.



FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

Here lies Muhammad Asad the journalist, the writer, the scholar, the diplomat, the freedom fighter, the adventurer, the knowledge seeker and the man.

Born in Galicia on July the 2nd in the year 1900, he dies on February the 20th in 1992. He lived a remarkable life, one that spanned almost an entire century having lived through and witnessed two world wars, the fall of the Islamic Caliphate in Turkey and the rise of modern secular nations. Muhammad Asad was one of the most influential Muslim thinkers of the twentieth century.

He now peacefully rests in a modest burial ground in Granada - the former Moorish province of Andalusia. Muhammad Asad has taken to a new journey, and it is hoped that the next adventure will end in the eternal gardens of a paradise so high.

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